



MSHA's Accident Prevention Program Safety Idea

Safety and
Health are
Values!

Guardrails, Barriers and Floor Covers

Recently a contractor consultant with 46 years of experience was fatally injured when he fell through a 4-foot by 6-foot opening 28 feet to the floor below. From 2000 to 2008, 72 Coal & Metal & Nonmetal miners were fatally injured from falls. In twenty-five of these fatal accidents, hazardous conditions occurred at elevated work surfaces such as at floor access openings or walkways where insufficient guardrails, barriers, floor covers or fall protection was used. Some of these accidents may have been prevented by simply replacing the floor coverings when the opening was not in use, or by providing barriers to eliminate the hazard.



To prevent similar accidents from occurring:

- 1) Inspect the work areas for all potential hazards including places that persons may fall from or through.
- 2) Take time to plan the work to safely perform the job.
- 3) Always wear fall protection when there is a danger or potential of falling.
- 4) Protect floor openings and leading edges near travel ways by installing guardrails or barriers in addition to warning signs.
- 5) Keep temporary access opening covers or railings secured in place. Immediately reinstall access covers when not bringing items through the opening.

If you have a tip you would like to pass on, you can email it to zzMSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov.
If your tip is selected, you will receive credit in this space.

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